



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection

February 23, 2012, 9:00 a.m.

by

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SB 2392 RELATING TO PROFESSIONAL AND VOCATIONAL LICENSING

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Taniguchi, and members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of this bill, SB 2392, to the extent that it would impact the nursing profession. This measure amends Chapter 436B which is implemented by the Professional and Vocational Licensing Division of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (“PVL/DCCA”). It authorizes professional and vocational licensing boards under the auspices of the PVL/DCCA to accept military education, training, and service toward the qualifications for a license, including a nursing license. It also allows the boards to adopt rules.

The Legislature in its wisdom required that nursing programs in Hawai'i meet the standards established by law and by the Hawai'i State Board of Nursing¹ to ensure the safety of Hawai'i consumers is not compromised. These standards are based on national accreditation and certification standards.

Accreditation is extremely important when considering a school, regardless of the degree program or field of study. If a school is not accredited, any credentials earned may not be considered to be of the same quality as if they were earned at an accredited university. The main national agencies for nursing education accreditation are the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The list of national certifying bodies is extensive.

The two primary reasons to attend an accredited nursing program is to ensure the quality and integrity of the education program. An accredited program has had its quality guaranteed by standards set into place by the Department of Education (“DOE”). Students enrolling in nursing programs also know that they are earning a high-quality

¹ Chapter 457, HRS, and Title 16, Chapter 89, Hawaii Administrative Rules

degree from a program that will allow them to continue their education, something not guaranteed with unaccredited programs.

In *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health* (2011), the Institute of Medicine's second key message notes that, "Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression." Future changes in the U.S. health care system and practice environments will require that nursing education at all levels provide a greater understanding of and experience in care management and quality improvement methods. Nursing education should serve as a platform for continued lifelong learning and include opportunities for seamless transition to higher degree programs. Accrediting, licensing, and certifying organizations must continue to mandate demonstrated mastery of core skills and competencies to complement the completion of degree programs and national nurse licensure/certification examinations.

UH Mānoa Nursing recognizes the value and quality of military education, training, and service. It is essential for the military to work hand in hand with the national accrediting bodies and the DOE to establish equivalencies so that individuals may receive recognition for appropriate training. These efforts will be beneficial to the individuals and support lifelong learning in nursing, which is becoming increasingly important with the changes in the health care system.

Currently, SB 2392 places the onus on the PVL/DCCA to decide whether the military education, training and experience presented by applicants meet the requirements of national accrediting and certifying organizations. It has neither the resources nor the expertise to do this.

UH Mānoa Nursing urges that educational equivalencies be further explored by the military before pursuing this bill. Therefore, we recommend that the Committee not move forward on SB 2392 at this time.

We appreciate your continuing support of nursing and healthcare in Hawai'i. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.